

<b>KENT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM</b>	<b>Procedure Number: 600-20</b>
<b>Curriculum and Instruction</b>	<b>Date of Review by Board: 7/2/01, 6/3/13, 11/12/18, 09/13/21</b>
<b>Subject: Student Attendance</b>	<b>Date Revised: 7/12/07, 8/11/08, 7/6/09, 6/3/13, 6/8/15, 11/12/18, 09/13/21</b>

## **I. Purpose**

Students should be expected to attend school and all classes regularly and to be punctual. There is a significant relationship between regular attendance and academic achievement and completion of a school program. Regular attendance assists students in the development of self-discipline and good work habits. These habits generally remain with the students as they enter the world of work. It is essential to teach the benefits of and encourage good attendance and punctuality during a student's educational career.

Regular attendance is a shared responsibility by the community, the home, students, and school personnel, and we must work together to promote it to the fullest extent possible.

Students who are pregnant or parenting will need a process that clarifies their ability to receive continuity of instruction, classroom participation, and learning experiences. Certain circumstances related to pregnancy or parenting should be certified absences from school and allow students to make up work from these absences.

The following procedures are to provide guidelines and standards for student attendance.

## **II. Definitions**

Within the context of these procedures, the following definitions apply:

A. Absence - A student is not physically present on school grounds and not participating in instruction or instruction-related activities at an approved off-grounds location for less than 10% of the school day.

B. Attendance - The act of being physically present at school or a school-related activity during the school day

C. Attendance Source Documents - Records that are maintained by classroom teachers, homeroom teachers, substitute teachers, or other staff members that document the students' attendance

D. Full Day - A student is attending an instructional program approved by the State, local school system, and/or school for greater than half of the school day.

E. Half Day -A student is attending an instructional program approved by the State, local school system, and/or school for 10%-50% of the school day.

F. Tardy - A student who arrives after the official start of the school day will be considered tardy

G. Early Leave - A student who is picked up from school and/or leaves before the official end of the school day is considered to have early leave

H. Chronically Absent - A student who is absent from school for more than 10% of the school days in any given marking period, semester, or academic year for unlawful reasons

I. Habitually Truant - A student who meets ALL of the following criteria during the school year:

1. Was age 5 through 20 year of age
2. Was enrolled in the Kent County Public School System for 91 or more days
3. Was unlawfully absent for 20% or more of the total days of enrollment

J. Lawful Absence - An excused absence for any portion of the day under the following conditions:

1. Death in the immediate family
2. Illness of the student
3. Court summons
4. Hazardous weather conditions
5. Work approved or sponsored by the school
6. Observance of a religious holiday
7. State emergency
8. Suspension
9. Lack of authorized transportation
10. Other emergency or set of circumstances which, in the judgment of the Superintendent or designee, constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school

K. Unlawful Absence - An unexcused absence, including absence for any portion of the day, for any reason other than those cited as lawful are presumed as unlawful and may constitute truancy. Students unlawfully absent are considered truant.

L. School-related Activity - Any school system activity, whether held on or off school property, in which a student directly participated, or in which the student does not directly participate but represents the school or student body simply by being there.

M. Truant - A student who is absent for a day or any portion of a day for any reason other than those cited as lawful in COMAR 13A.08.01.03 and/or failure to bring a note written by a parent/guardian to verify a lawful absence.

N. Adoption- The legal process whereby a person assumes the parenting of another child and the permanent transfer of all rights and responsibilities, along with filiation, from that child's biological parent or parents.

O. Custodial Parent- The parent who has either sole of physical custody of the child or the parent with whom the child resides for a majority of the time.

P. Visitation- The permission granted by the court to a parent to visit his/her child or children.

Q. Parent- A person who is or is acting as the mother or father of a child.

### **III. Standards**

A. The minimal standard is 94% attendance per marking period for all students. This standard considers both lawful and unlawful absences.

B. A student shall not be absent from school in excess of three (3) days in any single marking period for reasons coded as unlawful. Half days will accumulate. Two half days will equal one full day.

C. Any absences coded as lawful will not count against the three (3) day limit, but will be considered when implementing interventions.

D. Students who are tardy to school more than 20% of any marking period will be referred to Student Services for possible involvement from the Kent County States Attorney's Office.

E. The parent/guardian of each student must provide the necessary certification for lawful absences on the day that the student returns to school following the absence. If the necessary certification is not received by the school within three (3) school days, the absences(s) will be coded as unlawful, and the student will be considered as having been truant.

F. Parent notes may be used to excuse a maximum of three (3) absences in any marking period. Additional absences in any marking period require legal or medical documentation.

G. A visit to a post-secondary institution may be coded as a lawful absence by a high school administrator provided the student produces written confirmation of the visit.

### **IV. Actions or Consequences for Not Meeting the Standard**

A. Any student who has been unlawfully absent from school in excess of three (3) days in any single marking period will receive a failing grade in all subjects that marking period.

B. Parents will be notified when a student has any absences coded as unlawful

C. Interventions with regard to student attendance may include one or more of the following actions (school officials may waive these actions when they

are aware of circumstances beyond the student's control such as documented chronic illnesses, etc.):

1. Parents/Guardians will be notified via telephone upon a student's absence from school
2. Continued absence and/or tardiness of the student will result in the

the

initiation of one or more of the following actions:

a. Conference with parent, student, and the principal or designee

b. Letter to parent/guardian

c. Referral to school-based Student Services Team

d. Referral to County's Truancy Diversion Program

e. Referral to Supervisor of Student Services

f. A requirement to make up lost instructional time

g. Written contract

h. Removal of school privileges

i. Restriction of extracurricular activities

j. Failure of all classes for the marking period

k. Referral to Kent County State's Attorney's Office for violation of the compulsory attendance law

#### **V. Reinstatement of Grades**

A student who has failed all subjects due to exceeding the three (3) day limit of absences coded as unlawful in a marking period, shall have the earned grades reinstated providing the student does not exceed the three (3) day limit in the next marking period. Students who fail all subjects in the 4th marking period due to exceed the three (3) day limit of absences coded as unlawful will be unable to get those grades reinstated. If a student is a senior, this may affect their ability to graduate.

#### **VI. Make-Up Work**

##### **A. Lawful absences**

A student absent for lawful reasons will be permitted to make up work for full credit as long as it is completed within the time frame as stated in the make-up provisions of the grading criteria distributed to the student and submitted to the principal by the teacher. If work is not completed within this timeline, the student will receive a failing grade for the missed assignments.

##### **B. Unlawful absences**

Students will be permitted to make up work missed due to unlawful absences as long as the work is completed within the time frame as stated in the make-up provisions of the grading criteria distributed to the student and submitted to the principal by the teacher. As long as the assignments are completed within this time frame, the student will have the grade lowered one letter grade below the grade earned.

#### **VII. Appeals Process**

Parents/Guardians may follow the process listed below to appeal attendance violation decisions related to the "Student Attendance Policy" at both the school and central office levels:

1. The parent/guardian will be notified by the school administration when the student exceeds the limit for absenteeism, and as a consequence will receive failing grades.
2. The parent/guardian shall have the responsibility of filing an appeal upon the receipt of the notification letter.
3. The appeal must be submitted to the school administration no later than seven (7) school days following the distribution date of the report card for each marking period.
4. The principal or his/her designee will schedule a conference with the parent/guardian and student (when appropriate) to hear the appeal.
5. The principal or his/her designee will notify the parent or guardian of the outcome of the appeal no later than seven (7) school days following the hearing.
6. The right of due process permits the parent/guardian to appeal the decision rendered by the principal or his/her designee to the Superintendent's designee.

#### **VIII. Procedures to Monitor Attendance and Verify Absences/Tardiness**

The Supervisor of Student Services will work with all schools' principals to review the prescribed procedures in the Kent County Public Schools' Administrative Handbook.

##### **A. Attendance-monitoring Procedure**

###### **1. Record-keeping format**

A system-wide attendance-keeping format to comply with state and school system policy and regulations has been developed and is incorporated in the student database.

2. The principal of each school will establish procedures for the verification of student absences and tardiness. These procedures will be disseminated to each student at the beginning of each school year.

###### **3. Reporting absences**

a. A daily attendance record will be maintained of each student's tardiness, absence from school, and early leave.

b. A record of each student's lawful and unlawful absences from an individual class will be recorded and maintained.

c. Upon returning to school from an absence, a student is required to bring a written note from his or her parent/caretaker, or a physician, stating the reason for each absence.

4. Attendance monitoring system will provide information on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis that can be used to identify students with

problematic attendance, tardiness, and early leave patterns so corrective measures may be instituted.

5. Attendance monitoring system will provide information on students with chronic absenteeism and/or tardiness to the Office of Student Services so that causes may be sought, and remedies applied to improve attendance and punctuality of these students.

#### **IX. Information Dissemination**

Each school shall provide information on the attendance regulations to each student at the beginning of each school year and will provide similar information to each new enrollee during the school year. This information may be part of a Student Handbook or may be distributed as an entity within itself. Teachers responsible for homeroom or first period activities in each school will be charged with the responsibility of reviewing attendance regulations with students at the beginning of each school year. Individuals responsible for the entry of students during the school year will review attendance regulations with new students as part of the registration process.

#### **X. Attendance Recognition**

The principal of each school shall establish strategies and incentives to encourage regular school attendance. Students who meet the minimal 94% standard shall be recognized at the end of each marking period. This minimal standard shall include both lawful and unlawful absences.

#### **XI. Compliance**

A. The Superintendent/designee is responsible for monitoring standards and procedures related to attendance as set forth in state law and policy.

B. Principals are responsible for informing staff, students, and parents annually of the provisions in these procedures.

C. Principals are responsible for assigning and overseeing personnel to monitor the recording of daily/period attendance, the reporting of student absences (lawful and unlawful), and the entering and withdrawing of students for purposes of enrollment.

D. Teachers are responsible for maintaining daily/period attendance electronically in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Maryland Student Records System Manual. High school and middle school teachers are required to maintain class period attendance electronically.

E. Teachers are responsible for providing make-up work for students who are lawfully and unlawfully absent from school.

F. Students are responsible for completing and submitting make up work when they are absent.

G. Students are responsible for attending school or a school related activity each day that school is in session.

H. Parents/Guardians are responsible for providing necessary documentation when a student is lawfully absent from school.

I. Parents/Guardians are responsible for making sure their child is in school every day school is in session.

J. School-based problem-solving teams are responsible for monitoring students with attendance issues, developing and implementing interventions,

and providing support for those students who are chronically absent or habitually truant.

#### XII. Pregnant and Parenting Students

A. A student's absence due to a student's pregnancy is a lawful absence, provided the absence meets the following conditions and should use the code 02- Illness:

1. All absences due to pregnancy or parenting related conditions be excused for labor, delivery, recovery and prenatal/postnatal medical appointments.
2. Provide at least ten days of excused absences for a parenting student after the birth of the student's child. A medical note must be presented before a student can return to school.

B. A student's absence due to parenting needs is a lawful absence, provided the absence meets the following conditions and should use the code 13- Other emergency

1. Excuse any parenting related absences due to illness or a medical appointment of the student's child, including up to four days of absences per school year for which the school may not require a note from a physician. However, a parent note may be used for these four days above the county's allotment of three days.
2. Excuse any absence due to a legal appointment involving the pregnant or parenting student that is related to family law proceedings, including adoption custody and visitation.
3. The student who is the parent may also be granted 10 days of excused absences for parenting after the birth of the child.
4. Court Summons is still to be coded 04.

C. The pregnant or parenting student will be allowed to make up the work that the student missed in a time period that equals at least as many days that the student was absent.

D. A girl who is pregnant, either married or unmarried, who is under compulsory school age, may voluntarily withdraw from the regular school program provided that she enrolls in an appropriate educational program planned for her. The decision concerning an appropriate educational program shall be reached in joint consultation with the girl, her parent/guardian, or co-parent, and appropriate educational and medical personnel.

Appropriate education programs may be:

1. Continuation of the regular school program (modified in terms of individual needs)
2. Enrollment in a special school or special class for pregnant girls
3. Enrollment in a residential school (may be regional)
4. Home Hospital Instruction up to 6 hours per week
5. Programmed instruction
6. Admittance to a private maternity home
7. Online or credit recovery program
8. Combination of above programs

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